

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of the claims:

1. --- 3. (canceled)

4. (previously presented) A method for aligning transactional flows within an internet exchange portal, comprising:

 facilitating a first auction on the portal for a sale of a good between a buyer and a seller;

 sending the buyer a shipping form to gather a set of shipping data about shipping the good after the buyer and the seller agree for the sale of the good;

 collecting the set of shipping data for a contract entered into between the buyer and seller resulting from the sale of the good;

 soliciting bids during a second auction on the portal for shipping services for shipping the good as required by the contract;

 receiving a set of shipping bids; and

 selecting a bid from the set of bids according to a predetermined set of bid evaluation criteria.

5. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein the facilitating step of includes the step of:
 facilitating a business-to-business auction on the portal.

6. (original) The method of claim 4:

 wherein the collecting step includes the step of collecting a contract consummation event; and

 further comprising the step of billing an auction services fee upon occurrence of the event.

7. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein:

 the collecting step includes the step of collecting a bidding-period; and

the receiving step further comprising the step of receiving a set of shipping bids within the bidding-period.

8. (original) The method of claim 4:

wherein the shipping data is organized into a set of shipping fields;

wherein the collecting step includes the step of collecting additional sets of shipping data corresponding to additional contracts;

further comprising the step of grouping together those contracts having equivalent shipping data within at least one of the shipping fields; and

wherein the soliciting step includes the step of soliciting bids for providing shipping services for the group of contracts.

9. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein the soliciting step of includes the step of: soliciting bids for shipping services from a plurality of shippers and shipping brokers.

10. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein the soliciting step of includes the step of: displaying a predetermined set of shipping data on an internet exchange portal website accessible to shippers and shipping brokers.

11. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein the facilitating step of includes the step of: collecting the predetermined set of bid evaluation criteria from the seller.

12. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein the selecting step of includes the steps of: forwarding the bids onto the seller; and receiving a bid selection from the seller.

13. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein the selecting step of includes the steps of: selecting a bid with a lowest shipping price.

14. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein the selecting step of includes the steps of:

selecting a default shipper if none of the bids conform to the predetermined set of bid evaluation criteria.

15. (previously presented) A method for transactional flows within an internet exchange portal, comprising:

- soliciting bids during a first auction on the internet exchange portal for selling goods;

- soliciting bids during a second auction on the internet exchange portal for shipping the goods;

- receiving a set of bids from shippers for shipping the goods;

- selecting a winning shipper for shipping the goods; and

- sending a buyer of the goods a shipping form to gather information about the goods being shipped if a seller agrees to have the goods shipped with the shipper.

16. (previously presented) A computer-usable medium embodying computer program code for causing a computer to align transactional flows within an internet exchange portal, comprising:

- facilitating a first auction on the portal for a sale of goods between a buyer and a seller;

- after the buyer and the seller agree for the sale of the goods, then collecting by the portal a set of shipping data for a contract entered into between the buyer and seller resulting from the sale of the goods;

- soliciting bids during a second auction on the portal for shipping services for shipping the goods as required by the contract;

- receiving a set of shipping bids; and

- selecting a bid from the set of bids according to a predetermined set of bid evaluation criteria.

17. (original) The computer-usable medium of claim 16 wherein the facilitating step of includes the step of:

facilitating a business-to-business auction on the portal.

18. (original) The computer-usable medium of claim 16:

wherein the collecting step includes the step of collecting a contract consummation event; and

further comprising the step of billing an auction services fee upon occurrence of the event.

19. (original) The computer-usable medium of claim 16 wherein:

the collecting step includes the step of collecting a bidding-period; and

the receiving step further comprising the step of receiving a set of shipping bids within the bidding-period.

20. (original) The computer-usable medium of claim 16:

wherein the shipping data is organized into a set of shipping fields;

wherein the collecting step includes the step of collecting additional sets of shipping data corresponding to additional contracts;

further comprising the step of grouping together those contracts having equivalent shipping data within at least one of the shipping fields; and

wherein the soliciting step includes the step of soliciting bids for providing shipping services for the group of contracts.

21. (original) The computer-usable medium of claim 16 wherein the soliciting step of includes the step of:

soliciting bids for shipping services from a plurality of shippers and shipping brokers.

22. (original) The computer-usable medium of claim 16 wherein the soliciting step of includes the step of:

displaying a predetermined set of shipping data on an internet exchange portal website accessible to shippers and shipping brokers.

23. (original) The computer-usable medium of claim 16 wherein the facilitating step of includes the step of:

collecting the predetermined set of bid evaluation criteria from the seller.

24. (original) The computer-usable medium of claim 16 wherein the selecting step of includes the steps of:

forwarding the bids onto the seller; and

receiving a bid selection from the seller.

25. (original) The computer-usable medium of claim 16 wherein the selecting step of includes the steps of:

selecting a bid with a lowest shipping price.

26. (original) The computer-usable medium of claim 16 wherein the selecting step of includes the steps of:

selecting a default shipper if none of the bids conform to the predetermined set of bid evaluation criteria.

27. (canceled)

28. (previously presented) A method for transactional flows within an internet exchange portal, comprising:

soliciting bids during a first auction on an internet exchange portal for selling goods between buyers and sellers; and

if a buyer and a seller agree to a sale of a good, then soliciting bids during a subsequent second auction on the internet exchange portal for shipping services to ship the good to the buyer.

29. (previously presented) The method of claim 28, wherein the internet exchange portal automatically and immediately begins to solicit bids for the second auction once the buyer and the seller agree to the sale of the good.

30. (currently amended) The method of claim 28 further comprising, allowing the internet exchange portal to evaluate the bids during the second auction and to automatically select a bid according to a set of predetermined ~~bid~~ bid evaluation criteria.

31. (currently amended) The method of claim 28 further comprising, allowing the internet exchange portal to automatically select a winning bid for shipping services based on (1) a lowest shipping ~~price~~ prices and (2) prior on-time delivery performance of a shipper.